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NEWS RELEASE

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SEVEN SITES ON LAKE CUMBERLAND DESIGNATED ‘NATURAL AREAS’
Land owned by Corps of Engineers is home to 10 rare plant species

SOMERSET, Ky. (Sept. 12, 2005) – Seven sites owned by the Army Corps of Engineers have been designated as state “natural areas” to benefit 10 rare plant species adjacent to Lake Cumberland.

Craig Shoe, Lake Cumberland resource manager for the Corps of Engineers, and Donald S. Dott, Jr., director of the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC), today jointly announced inclusion of the sites in the Kentucky Natural Areas Registry on Lake Cumberland.

The sites, which amount to about 178 acres, are strung along Lake Cumberland in parts of Pulaski, Russell and Wayne counties. By agreeing to have the sites registered as natural areas, the corps, which decides how they are to be used, acknowledges their ecological significance and voluntarily commits itself to their protection.

Expanded protection of the sites will ensure critical habitat for plants and animals but also continued recreation such as boating, hunting, and bird watching for visitors.

The Kentucky Natural Areas Registry Program, managed by KSNPC, was established in 1986. It is for ecologically significant properties whose owners agree to protect rare species and natural communities that are present. Sixty properties covering some 4,654 acres are currently enrolled.

“I am pleased to continue our support of KSNPC conservation programs, and assist in raising public awareness of environmental issues in our region, such as disappearing habitat,” Shoe said. “We feel partnerships such as this one between the Corps of Engineers and the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission help preserve the important landscapes that Kentuckians want protected.”

The Lake Cumberland sites include undisturbed limestone cliffs and natural seeps. They support populations of southern maidenhair ferns, September elm, northern white cedar and other rare plants. They also are home to a variety of more common plants and animals.

Both organizations look forward to continuing their partnership and furthering conservation of biologically important sites on Lake Cumberland. “Collaborative conservation efforts of private individuals and agencies like the Corps of Engineers that own important natural lands are critical to providing meaningful and lasting protection for rare species that occur in Kentucky,” Dott said.

For information on the Kentucky Natural Areas Registration Program or the KSNPC, contact Ron Scott at 801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601 or call (502) 573-2886. For additional information regarding recreational opportunities on Lake Cumberland, call the Corps of Engineers at (606) 679-6337 Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. EDT.